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Register

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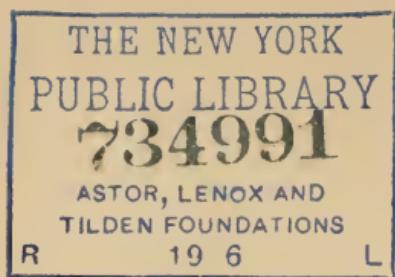
MASONIC TEMPLE, PHILADELPHIA,

FEB. 27, 1885.

BY

VET. BRO. I. LAYTON REGISTER,

*P. M. of Lodge No. 51, Philadelphia, Past Grand
High Priest of N. J., Past Grand
Commander of N. J.*



A TRIP TO CALIFORNIA.

It is within the recollection of people now living, when a trip from Philadelphia to Boston took as much time as is now required to go from this city to San Francisco. That was in the days of stage-coaches. We now live in an era when the earth is girdled by iron bands, over which the fleet-winged locomotive, with unabated breath, speeds on its course, filling up time and space to a degree that is only outstripped by the electric current.

In those earlier days, to go as far as Pittsburgh, or Cincinnati, or Chicago, was a long journey, to what was then called "The West." Now, there is a "Far West," that reaches away beyond those cities, and is only bounded in its expanse by the mighty Pacific ocean, three thousand miles away!

Let us, in imagination, take this jour-

ney that spans the continent, and from the bright shores of our well-known Atlantic, from whence the glimmering rays of the morning light rises to herald the day, we rush onward to the slope of the golden Pacific, beneath whose placid bosom the great orb sinks to rest in radiant sunset glory.

After leaving home we travel a distance on land, as far as a voyage by sea would be from Philadelphia to Europe, having the advantage over an ocean trip in beholding nature in all her grandeur, without the discomforts of seasickness to spoil the appetite of our feasting eyes, as we behold the varied and wonderful scenes that swiftly pass before our vision with kaleidoscopic effect and bewilderment.

At night, when the moon shines upon the broad plains, the railroad track appears to be close to the edge of some great smooth lake, that stretches out in unbroken lines to the distant horizon beyond, where sky and water seem to meet, while on the other side of the car, the glow of the sinking sun shoots up its dying streaks in all their twilight beauty.

As the nearer Western cities and States are so well known, we will not stop to

dwell upon their prodigious growth and prosperity, or their many wonderful sights, but begin taking notes of what we saw from the car window, after passing the muddy waters of the great Mississippi river.

Arrived at Kansas City, we stop a little while and mingle in the bustle of the good-natured crowd that may always be found at this Eastern terminus of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. We notice the faces of the anxious emigrants, making inquiries in broken English, of the brawny Westerner, while people from every nation are hurrying hither and thither, preparing to scatter to their new homes in this broad domain, where fertile valleys and green-clad prairies, may be said, in poetic language, to be overflowing with milk and honey, to welcome them.

We traverse the State of Kansas its whole length from east to west. It is said to be large enough to give every man, woman and child in the United States an acre of ground. We were somewhat surprised in comparing what we hastily saw with the glowing descriptions that were written, for it is pronounced by some to have the most beautiful landscapes in the world. We expected to see corn-fields

stretching away out of sight, waving their tasselled heads so high, as to excite the envy of Eastern farmers, but we were disappointed.

Yet too much credit cannot be given to a people that have changed a wilderness into fertile fields, and almost proved the prediction of Agassiz to be true, that the Kansas plains would become the harvest-field of the world.

We go to bed in comfortable sleeping-cars, and on rising the next day are greeted at early dawn with a thrilling sight of Pike's peak, 100 miles away, its snow-capped summit dazzling with brilliant lustre as it catches the first rays of the sun burst.

We are now nearing Colorado, the State of grand and lofty altitudes, of salubrious air and gorgeous scenery, that baffles the pen to portray, reveling in millions of mineral wealth—a dream-land in which the common realities are lost in boundless visions of ecstasy.

Colorado is double the size of Pennsylvania, with an average elevation that is higher than our Allegheny mountains, and from this lofty plane rise towering peaks that seem to kiss the sky above, and are veiled in perpetual snow.

Arrived at Denver, we were surprised

to find a model city of 75,000 inhabitants, and many fine buildings. Less than thirty years ago, or just before our Civil war, all the region around about Denver was the home and the hunting ground of the Indians, where they roved freely. But the red-men's lodge has given place to the white-man's palace, by the right of might.

A side trip from Denver to Idaho Springs, gave us our first treat of one of the wonderful cañons that have been thrown all around the State with promiscuous prodigality. We feel like the countryman who gapes in awe on his first visit to the city, and we look aghast at the strange upheavals of nature.

For thirty miles the railroad follows Clear creek, winding in and out its crooked course, and going up and up, till we reach an elevation of 7000 feet, the bare precipitous sides of the cañon rising to nearly 1000 feet higher at some places, and assuming all kinds of shapes that fancy could imagine.

Arrived at Idaho Springs we indulge in a remarkable bath in a pool of *soda water*, at a temperature of ninety degrees, that was perfectly delicious. The water flows out of the mountain side, heated by some subtle volcanic influence.

Before returning to Denver, we were warned by the thunder and lightning, that suddenly startled us, of an approaching storm. It was one of the usual cloud-bursts to which the mountain region is subject, and of brief duration, though often very destructive; for as we proceeded on our journey back, we noticed that the little stream had become swollen and risen three feet above its ordinary height, and in its turbulent and riotous condition was charging on its downward course like a miniature Niagara rapids, carrying away bridges and every other obstruction in its path, while the ground was strewn with hail, showing the trail of the storm.

The next day, we make another excursion, and go to Manitou Springs, one of the prominent summer resorts of Colorado. The route brings us into the heart of some of the grandest and most picturesque scenery. The gigantic rocks, thrown into confused masses, assume forms that vividly draw upon the imagination, and at one point we seem to see the ruins of an old castle perched upon an impregnable palisade, which in a moment disappears from view, as the train whirls by on its curving course.

At Manitou, we rest awhile at a com-

fortable hotel, and enjoy drinking and bathing in the soda water that bubbles out of the ground, as fresh and nice as can be drawn from the artistic fountains of any of our attractive drug stores.

We industriously employ our stay at Manitou. Enterprising boys offer specimens of gold and silver quartz for sale, and we watched, with some fascination, a freight car that was being loaded with silver ore, the men shoveling in the crude stuff as though it were ordinary earth. Several days might be profitably spent in visiting the numerous mines in the region around, out of which millions of dollars have been taken, and into which, it may be safely said, other millions have been sunk, taken from the pockets of far away confiding stockholders!

Williams cañon is within easy walking distance, its rugged sides rising several hundred feet. We ventured to climb up one side to the Cave of the Winds, from whence may be had a grand view of the surrounding mountains. On one we noticed two conspicuous rocks, named Gog and Magog, that appeared to be only one hundred feet apart, but were actually half a mile distant from each other. This phenomenon is caused by the clear atmosphere that renders far objects to seem

near at hand. Even Pike's peak, twelve miles off, with its snowy mantle, seems to be only as many squares away, and the low building on its top, used as a signal station, can be distinctly seen with the naked eye.

The Garden of the Gods next claims our attention. It is a plane, extending over half a mile in length, on which are scattered red sandstone rocks, partly worn away in irregular seams by some unknown agency, that rudely resemble a variety of objects, the principal ones being named the Mushrooms, the Wine-Casks, the Toad Stools, Mother Grundy and Child, the Toad, the Frog, the Irishman (which is very good), the Lamb and Lion, the Elephant's Head, the Devil's Card Table, the Happy Family, the Hog, the Shepherd's Dog, the Camel, and so on. These are the Gods of the Garden. The Balanced Rock, enormous in size, is really an object of much interest. And at the entrance to the Garden, as approached from one side, is the Sentinel Rock, seeming to stand on guard between two immense blocks of red sandstone, that rear their heads three hundred feet high.

Turning our faces again Westward, we

leave Denver, and with note book in hand, jot down many things that are strange.

The irrigating canals, seen so frequently, excite our wonder, until we learn their wise purposes in supplying the thirsty soil with needed water during the dry season. This supply is drawn from the unfailing mountain streams of melted snow, through wooden aqueducts or flumes, that follow the natural contour of the ground, or along the mountain sides, in zig-zag courses for many miles. In timber regions, these aqueducts are also used to float logs down to the railroad for shipment.

Another curious sight in Colorado, in summer, are the dried-up water-courses, that look as though the streams had vacated their regular routes and gone elsewhere. But when the rainy season comes, and the clouds empty themselves thick and fast, as is often the case in the mountains, augmented by the melted snow, then it is that these dried-up water-courses assume their natural functions and dash and plunge with unchecked fury.

Among the cutest and prettiest little things to be seen, and so frequently met on the way, are the prairie dogs, sitting watchfully at a safe distance, on

their little mound-houses, with heads erect, and their little forepaws hanging limp on their breasts, like very dudes, looking curiously at the swiftly passing train. I wrote my little daughter that I should like to have brought her one home, but they are not easily caught.

The railroad on the plains requires but little grading, but where a cut is necessary, open fences are erected near the side of the track, through which, in winter, the snow filters and accumulates in drifts about the fences, instead of on the track, and by this means travel is not impeded.

During the construction of the Pacific Railroad, it is said that towns were built and often abandoned as fast as the road progressed. The population of such places then were mostly roughs and gamblers, and as water was scarce and as costly almost as whiskey, more of the latter fluid was consumed. But this rough element was driven from place to place further West, as the better class outnumbered them, though oftentimes terrible fights ensued before the outlaws gave way.

It would be tedious to mention the many towns, large and small, that were passed on the route. We are following the sun fast, and getting into higher alti-

tudes, till we reach a point seven thousand feet above the sea, surrounded by chains of mountains, where the air is perceptibly cooler, and long snow-sheds are erected over the tracks for protection in winter.

Some Indians are seen at the stations, or taking a free ride on the platforms of the cars, wrapped up in dirty blankets, their unkempt appearance making a very different impression from that received in our youth from gay picture books. The railroad companies permit the Indians to ride, without charge, in order to obtain their good-will, and the poor creatures seem to enjoy the privilege and avail themselves of the pleasure quite often. Indian squaws, with papooses strapped upon their backs, would have been a pretty sight had the greasy urchins been clean. Little Indian boys showed their skill in shooting arrows at coins that were freely put up as marks by the indulgent passengers. And Indian girls, with painted cheeks, looked like blushing maidens—at a distance. But the real Indian is not handsome, and the Western people cruelly assert, that the only good Indians are dead Indians!

Leaving Wyoming Territory, we enter Utah at an impressive point, called Castle

Rock. From a distance, the ragged rocks resemble a deserted castle. Some of the wildest scenery now presents itself, the towering cliffs rising in majestic splendor five hundred to fifteen hundred feet near at hand, while farther back from the railroad, the massive rocks are said to be still grander, standing forth in all their wild and weird beauty, with column, dome and spire, to lure the traveler on. Rounding a curve, we behold a freak of nature called Hanging Rock, and near by, on a cliff, one thousand feet above the track, is the spot where the Mormons, in 1857, erected a fortification to defend the pass against an expected invasion of their territory by United States troops. But its ragged battlements did not bar our passage, as the train whirled by, and immediately afterwards on looking up at the mountain side, we see what bears a rude resemblance to the prow of a ship, and is called Steamboat Rock, the seams of the rocks running up four hundred feet high, forming the ribs of the vessel, while perched on top are dwarf trees that represent passengers.

Gliding through Weber cañon, we pass two immense parallel ridges of granite, fifty feet in height and ten feet apart,

lying prone down the mountain side, that are facetiously called the Devil's Slide.

But it would be impossible to portray by mere words the grandeur of this great cañon, enclosed by precipitous walls, five hundred to two thousand feet high, the sides seared by the storms of ages, and shutting in the little rushing river for forty miles, as it plunges over rocks and boulders and seethes in eddies around the curves.

At last we reach the Mecca of Mormondom, Salt Lake City. We found it a quiet, pleasant place, with wide unpaved streets, and clear water running down the gutters, from the mountains.

Of course the Mormon element very largely predominated, outnumbering the Gentiles seven to one. But the people looked just the same there as here, and dressed in the same fashion. We talked with some of them about their peculiar religion, and found them apparently sincere and temperate in their views, and though their faith be vile, they deserve great credit for developing the country and converting a wilderness into fruitful fields of agriculture.

There are only a few houses that make any pretension to be showy, but general thrift and industry among the masses is

evident everywhere, without any display of wealth.

The immense Tabernacle is 256 feet long and 150 feet wide, and will seat 8000 people. It is plain in appearance, but the roof is a wonderful work of architecture, springing from the walls in one unbroken arch. And so perfect are the acoustics, that we were able to hear distinctly, in the gallery at one end of the building, a whisper uttered on the platform, at the other end.

The large organ is said to be perfect in mechanical and musical power and effect, and was made by Mormon workmen, showing a degree of skill that is worthy of mention.

The new Temple, begun over twenty years ago, and yet unfinished, is very substantially built of granite. The titheing house, where the faithful Mormon deposits one-tenth of his earnings, either in money or merchandise, and Brigham Young's grave, naturally excited our interest.

Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, with the symbolic words, "Holiness to the Lord," over the entrance, is a large building, and for variety of goods sold and amount of business transacted, will compare favorably with Wanamaker's

Grand Depot. This fact struck us as something marvelous, considering that forty years ago, this region was almost a desert.

A Mormon, reported to have three or four wives, invited us to see the effect of irrigation in his garden, showing a variety of fine fruit and immense strawberries that were raised on ground where nothing formerly grew but sage brush. A pleasant, though dusty drive, is to Fort Douglass, located on the side of the Wasatch mountains, 500 feet above the city, garrisoned by soldiers, ready for any outbreak among the Mormons or Indians, for both are equally distrusted.

But one of the most novel and delightful experiences was a bath in the Great Salt Lake, which we reached after passing over the River Jordan, dry shod, in a railroad car. This lake has been compared with Lake Como or Lake Killarney for beauty. Its still silvery surface is hemmed in by broken mountain ranges, whose pinnacles rise to perpetual snow. The water is so dense with salt that it is almost impossible to sink, and on leaving the bath our bodies were encrusted with smarting salt scales. The white sand along the shore is peculiar, as every particle, however small, under the mag-

nifying glass, is shown to be a perfect sphere.

But we have not time to see everything, or to tell you all we did see, and we drop the curtain upon the Mormon scene as we hurry away, bound further West.

Passing Ogden, where the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroads unite, we came to the spot where the last spike was driven in 1869, that joined the West to the East by iron bands. Great was the rejoicing at the time, for it was a national event of much importance, both from a commercial and political point of view. For, at the outbreak of our Civil war, about which time these roads were begun, it became a matter of some apprehension whether California, in its isolated location, might not desire to secede and form an independent empire, taking with it the whole region west of the mountains. This fear was happily allayed by the union effected through the building of the railroads, that were hurried forward to completion. And the last spike that crowned the event as well as the last rail, became objects of art and were cut to pieces and carried off as relics.

Along the upper end of Great Salt lake is an extended sandy plain, whitened with

dry salt, that glistens in the sun like sea-foam. Beyond, are the alkali plains or the Great American desert, which was supposed to have been submerged at one time and formed a part of Great Salt lake. This theory is confirmed by the marks or lines on the sides of the mountains next to the lake, showing that the waters have subsided to a considerable extent.

The finely powdered dust from these alkali beds sifts into every crevice of the car. But in the midst of this desert, here and there are seen patches of green oases, due to irrigation, a factor that has already accomplished wonderful results, and indicates still greater possibilities in reclaiming the barren soil for the profit of the husbandman.

But while we moralize thus, as we look out of the luxurious car window, we are reminded of earlier days in this region, when the resolute pioneers dared to venture across the trackless waste, as Columbus did over the unknown sea, not able to tell where the desert ended, leaving, perchance, many unmarked graves by the wayside.

Less than thirty years ago, the pony express was the only means of carrying the mail through this desolate region.

The hardships endured and the risks encountered by the brave postman in those days, is something almost incredible, as he wended his weary way, all alone, over the mountains, in all kinds of weather, oftentimes through deep and treacherous snows, and in a country inhabited by hostile Indians and wild animals. Now, all is changed, and the mail is carried from Philadelphia to San Francisco in as few days as heretofore required weeks.

We have passed from Utah into Nevada, and as we cross the State line that separates the silver State from its golden neighbor, we utter the motto of California, "Eureka."

The celebrated Sierra Nevada mountains now come in sight, and with double engines we prepare to cross them and to enjoy some of the most picturesque scenery to be found in America. At Truckee we begin to ascend the mountains, passing under twenty-eight miles of snow sheds, and finally reaching the summit, at an elevation of over seven thousand feet above the sea, while far above us, bleak and bare, rise the ancient granite hills, just as they stood when "the earth was without form," their snowy caps glistening in the expanding

glow of the morning sun, inviting the traveler to scenes of rarest beauty.

Through the chinks and windows of the snow-sheds, we catch passing glimpses of this wonderful landscape, and looking down one side of the mountains, we had a magnificent view of Donner Lake, a perfect sheet of water, nestling serenely among the hills. It was here that an emigrant family, named Donner, perished, while attempting to cross the mountains in the winter, their bodies being entombed under forty feet of snow, and not discovered till the following spring. The mountain avalanches are terribly destructive, even to this day.

Mountain scenery has a charm and peculiarity about it that is almost indescribable, and particularly is this the case when we are surrounded by lofty altitudes and deep ravines that bewilder us with their intensity and variety. At one place we are reminded of the superb horse-shoe view on our Alleghany mountains, only it is more expansive in the Sierra Nevadas, and we beheld range piled upon range, and tier upon tier of mountain tops, stretching their purple tints away off into the immeasurable horizon, until lost in the blue hue of the sky above and beyond.

At a point called Cape Horn, we become enchanted with the view while looking down the rugged mountain side twenty-five hundred feet into the sweet valley, where the American river appears like a silver thread, glistening in the sunlight and winding through green fields. The swiftly-passing train, from its eyrie height gives us but a hasty glimpse of this fairy land, and as the bold bluff recedes from view and diminishes in size, it becomes the background of a lovely picture, surpassing the most vivid imagination that was ever attempted to be placed on canvas by the most gifted artist.

Passing from this æsthetic vision of dream-life, we directly have presented to our observation huge excavations in the mountain side, showing the result of hydraulic mining for gold. Water is brought in flumes from the region of perpetual snows and hurled with terrific force against the side of the mountain, digging out great trenches in a remarkably short space of time.

But eye and brain are fairly tired looking and thinking of so many wonderful sights, and we rest awhile, and with glad hearts await the end of our delightful journey, and in the fading light of a

California sunset, we descend the mountains and approach the Golden Gate.

As there will not be time to-night to speak of our stay in California, I will conclude with a description of another portion of Colorado, through which we passed on our way home.

On our return Githens and I left the railroad for a side trip to Lake Tahoe and the silver mines. Securing seats in the stage, the driver cracked his whip and away went the six horses up the mountain side over the old overland road. The lake is over 6000 feet above the sea, its clear waters near the shores reflecting upon its rippling surface the white sand on the bottom like burnished gold. Further out, where the water deepens, the brilliant emerald color changes to a rich indigo blue, as perfect and even in its hue as the sky above that canopies it. This gem of a lake is encased in a spur of the Sierra Nevada mountains, that rise in broken snow-capped ridges 2000 to 5000 feet higher, shelving off abruptly into the lake, the depth in some places being 1800 feet. A boat ride around this magnificent sheet of water is regarded as one of the greatest attractions to tourists.

The water is so nearly pure, that it is difficult to keep afloat while swimming.

Drowned bodies never rise to the surface, the water being so cold as to prevent decomposition. The temperature throughout the year is about the same, and the lake does not consequently freeze in winter, except over a small, shallow indentation called Emerland bay. There the sides of the mountain widen out into a pretty little cañon, covered with green to the top.

It would hardly be possible to describe a sunset scene on this lovely lake. It was like a double picture. As the fading flush of the declining day deepened in tone behind the glowing mountain peaks, the twinkling stars appeared in the darkening heavens above, while below, on the placid bosom of the mirrored lake, the gorgeous colors are reflected in matchless splendor, that would defy the artist's attempt to convey to canvas.

The trip by stage from Lake Tahoe to Carson, Nevada, was through the most rugged and barren mountain scenery yet seen. But the six-horse team traveled up the sides at a trot, dashing down and around the dangerous curves on a run, that made everybody hold on and breathe freer when we reached the level plain. The region had a desolate appearance, the timber having been cut, leaving the

mountains bare and angry-like, as we almost touched the jagged edges of the cliffs, that seemed to look down on us like skeleton sentinels, waiting their final doom.

Passing on to Virginia City we reach the heart of what was once the most celebrated mining region in the world. But the great milling works and machinery are silent, for the silver ore seems to have been almost exhausted, and instead of a bonanza of big dividends, the mines are in a borrosca condition or losing money.

Some idea of this depression was seen in the undisguised decay of Virginia City. The number of inhabitants has been reduced one-half from what it was ten years before, and property then considered worth \$100,000 would not sell now for \$10,000. The enormous sum of \$370,000,000 in gold and silver has been taken out of Nevada alone. It is there that the great bonanza kings, Mackey, Flood, Fair, and O'Brien accumulated their immense wealth.

The machinery required to pump the water from these mines, is probably the largest in the world. At the Union Shaft are six large boilers, side by side, going day and night. The fly-wheel measured thirty six feet in diameter, and weighs

one hundred and twelve tons, the engines being one thousand horse-power, all in the most perfect order and detail.

But the most interesting event was going down into the bowels of the earth. We were courteously provided with woolen suits and heavy soled shoes kept for the purpose, and with lanterns for each person, we entered the cage, and in the short space of four minutes descended 2500 feet. The temperature grew decidedly warm, rising quickly to 100 degrees and sending the perspiration out of our bodies in streams. Emerging from the cage, we followed our guide, fearing no danger, passing through a labyrinth of drifts, and then descended four hundred feet lower in another cage, where the air was beginning to be stifling. Through one drift we walked for six hundred feet, where the thermometer indicated 112 degrees and at one place 127, until we began almost to wonder whether we were not trespassing on the devil's dominions. But down still further we go, two hundred feet more, making 3106 feet under the surface. The sensation experienced was so queer, that I think visitors rarely go down but once. There was something awful about it, that impressed us with man's insignificance. The miners work

in three gangs of eight hours each, but the intense heat prevents their working more than fifteen minutes at a time, when they come out into the cooling rooms, where the air is kept fresh and cool by the great machinery on top of the ground.

Leaving this wonderful region where the precious metal is as "common as dirt," we return to Ogden for a trip over the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. We noticed that the engine was made at Baldwin's in Philadelphia, the name instantly calling up memories of our far-away home. Gliding out of the depot in handsome Pullman cars, we skirt the shore of Great Salt lake, and a little further on pass by Utah lake, a body of fresh water, emptying into Great Salt lake.

At Provo we behold Mount Nebo, standing alone in majesty, guarding the entrance to the valley, its steep sides covered with verdure to the very top, in pleasing contrast to the barren hills left behind. Scattered all along the valley are Mormon settlements. At one place, as we ascend the mountain, the rocks high above us form a perfect picture of a ruined castle, with towers, windows and arched entrance complete.

This narrow-gauge railroad is consid-

ered one of the greatest feats of engineering. It has many curves, and the joking conductor had many tales to tell about its crookedness as it goes winding up the mountain side. One was, that on rounding a certain curve, the engineer takes a light for his pipe from the brakeman on the platform of the rear car! And again, an engineer stopped to let another train pass, when he discovered it was the rear end of his own train!

Two engines slowly drag our train up to the summit, where we cross the Wasatch mountains at an elevation of nearly 8000 feet, the grade of the road being about 216 feet to the mile. Descending, we follow the little stream in its sinuous course through Castle cañon, where a magnificent view bursts upon us, as in and out we wind on the irregular mountain sides, that slope away up and off, mingling in the distance with other mountains beyond, till lost in the horizon, grand beyond description. Soon the river sides assume a more perpendicular form, their serrated and weather-worn faces cut into many curious shapes, presenting a battered front. Projected from this mass of rocks is Castle Gate, a long, slender monolith, 500 feet or more in height, against which the echo of the en-

gine's whistle sounds like the answering call of mighty giants. And then, as the train whirls by on its swinging curve, the gate seems to close up this wonderful cañon, leaving upon our smitten senses an impression that a vision of the supernatural had been exposed to view, of which we caught but a slitting glance.

Down into the valley we descend, where but a few weeks before a cloud-burst washed away twenty miles of the road-bed. So terrible was the force of the rushing water that the iron rails were twisted and bent like so much wire, the débris being scattered all along the road. The water rushed through a tunnel to the depth of eight feet.

During the night we crossed a desert, and after daylight again ascended the mountains side, at a grade of 211 feet to the mile, and came into Cimmaron valley, where we enter another incomparable cañon, and we thought it well that the impression of the previous day's vista did not burden the memory in one day, for two such sights coming close together would have made us wild with excitement.

After a good breakfast of venison and trout, we got aboard an open observation car, the better to get an unobstructed

view, as we speed along by the clear water's side, as it plunges over moss-covered boulders in its narrow bed, while stretching away above us, on both sides, we view with bated breath the grandeur of the lofty precipices of Black cañon, rising higher and higher, and capped by the Curricanti Needle, 3000 feet high, as a crowning glory.

In spring time the riven sides of this dark cañon are turned into a series of sparkling waterfalls that tumble over the jagged sides in fascinating bewilderment. The scene is a shifting panorama. Now its craggy sides shoot up into the sky, and in another moment our gaze is enraptured with some deep recess or gorge, down which, even at the dry season, the water comes leaping into the river below. One spot is called the Bridal Veil, that was particularly beautiful, springing, seemingly from the sky, in spirituelle and gauzy array.

So close does the railroad cling to the steep sides of the rock that there is no place for the telegraph wires, except to be attached to the rocks above the track. Emerging from this beautiful scene, we come out into a wide and fertile valley, and stop at Gunnison, a young mining

city, with a \$200,000 hotel, and gas and water works.

Leaving this peaceful valley we again ascend the mountain to Marshall's Pass, where another different kind of view is presented. We keep close beside the old wagon-road for ten miles, built long before the railroad was projected, and we go up and up until an elevation of 10,857 feet is reached, at a grade of 218 feet to the mile. Except in South America, no railroad crosses the mountains at a greater altitude than does the Denver and Rio Grande. The air is now perceptibly rarified and exhilarating, and breathing is quite troublesome with some people. Unlike the cañons through which we so recently passed, and where we strain our necks in looking upward, we now look down on the landscape, and see many hundred feet below us tiny streams, hemmed in by wide ravines, whose sides expand in view as we rise above them, the whole covered with sweet-scented pines and wild-mountain flowers, the hills rising one behind the other, till the farthest is lost in the blue sky beyond.

We have not yet reached the top, and as we mount higher and higher, we see afar off in the distance and above us, a

row of snow-sheds, and when the porter says we will soon be up there, the wondering query is, How will we get there? for, as we turn the Horseshoe curve, we seem to be going in another direction, while away down below us is the track, over which we came but a moment before, that had doubled upon itself, and appeared like two threads stitching the skirt of a beautiful garment of green velvet, that lay spread out in gorgeous array at our feet.

Soon we see Marshall's Pass away above our heads, and though only half a mile off in a straight line, it requires six miles of railroading to reach it, in the zig-zag course, and at one moment the top appears in front and in another, behind the train.

But what shall be said to give you any adequate idea of the grand view obtained from this elevation of two miles above the sea? We didn't have much time to linger, so the image must be swept in a swift survey of the surrounding scene. The mountains appeared like great waves of the sea, rolling upon each other and spreading out beyond our vision. We could exhaust all the superlative adjectives permitted and then fail to impart to others the sublimity of the scene before

us. We simply looked on amazed and enchanted, the clear sunshine brightening up the elaborate landscape, and bringing out every outline with distinctness, and causing us to wonder how much more beautiful this world must appear from the skies above us, where the Creator of all looks down upon His perfect work that He made for man's happiness. But we were aroused out of this delicious reverie by the reverberating echoes of the engine's shrill whistle, and the train moved on.

From the mountain top may be seen, far below, three other tracks running parallel with each other, that appear to be different roads, and we were surprised to learn that it was the same road over which we had to go, in its encircling course, in order to get down to the plains. The ride down opens up another view of mountain splendor, as the shifting panorama is spread out before our enraptured eyes, the vast expanse clad in living green, merging into a purple haze beyond, where the farthest mountains drop quickly out of sight and disappear as we descend.

But what glowing words shall we use, or into what fervid ink shall we dip our feeble pen, in presuming to speak of the Grand cañon, or Royal gorge of the

Arkansas? It is said that there is nothing in Europe to equal it, and as we had just drank in the sublime till our senses reeled, we felt like those at the marriage-feast to whom the better wine was offered, after all had had enough of that which was good.

But let us quaff the draught.

Following the Arkansas river, in its downward course, we came at first into a wide valley, bounded on either side by lofty mountain peaks, piled in seeming confusion. We enter this grandest of all cañons, the walls of which get narrower and narrower, as though some earthquake had burst the mountain asunder, its jagged sides rising vertically full 3000 feet above us, enclosing the river in contracted bounds, until at one point the stupendous mountain sides are only thirty feet apart, leaving no space for the railroad track. To enable the railroad to pass through this narrow defile, the engineer's skill devised a suspension bridge, wedged in lengthwise above the little stream, that raged harmlessly below.

Over this bridge we passed in safety, but we felt that it was something awful to look upon and awful to contemplate, and though we could get but a glimpse of this fearful work of man and nature,

because of the swiftly passing train, we were thankful for the privilege of seeing nature in her granduer and glory, and can now better understand the meaning of the prophet of old, when he said, "Now let Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have beheld Thy glory."

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